

SEIU Illinois State Council

Stronger Together

SERVICE EMPLOYEES' INTERNATIONAL UNION, STATE COUNCIL 2022 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is for Candidates running for the following offices only:

Cook County President, Board of Commissioners, Assessor, Clerk, Sheriff, Treasurer, and Board of Review;
MWRD Commissioner, and the Illinois General Assembly

Candidates seeking endorsement for a federal office should complete a different questionnaire.

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) State Council, representing 150,000 Illinois workers in health care, property services and the public sector. SEIU State Council is comprised of SEIU HCII, Local 1, and Local 73. This spring, the SEIU Illinois State Council will conduct an endorsement process to determine which candidates best support working families' issues and merit our endorsement for the 2022 primary election on June 28, 2022.

Your responses to these questions will help us make endorsement decisions and may be used to communicate the difference between candidates to union members. Please be candid, complete, and forthright in your responses.

Completed questionnaires must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 11, 2022

The endorsement procedure is a two-step process. Once a completed questionnaire is submitted, candidates seeking an endorsement must interview with the SEIU COPE screening committee. Those screenings will take place virtually during after-business hours the week of March 23rd. We will confirm the exact day and time of your screening upon submission of your questionnaire.

Campaign Staff & Contact

Candidate Name _____
Campaign Contact _____
Campaign Name _____
Campaign Address _____
Email _____
Campaign Telephone _____
Office Sought _____

Anticipated Campaign Budget

Amount Raised to Date _____
Overall Expected Budget _____
Amount Expected to Raise _____

WORKERS RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Do you support the Workers' Rights Constitutional Amendment? If yes, how will you help to ensure its passage?

BACKGROUND

Briefly describe your background, including personal, educational and professional information. If you currently or previously have been elected to office, please list what office and when.

Please list all your employers over the past five years and the nature of work you performed for each employer, including lobbying, consulting, and contractual employment. If applicable, please list all clients you have lobbied for, including which government entities you have lobbied on behalf of each client.

If elected, do you plan to seek or maintain employment outside of your role as an elected official? If so, please provide details as to the nature of work you intend to pursue

Have you ever been convicted of a crime in a court of law? If so, please explain.

Have you ever been a member of a labor union, or do you have any connections to the labor movement? *

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

Briefly state why you are seeking the SEIU'S endorsement.

Describe your strategy to win this race including how you will establish an effective campaign committee to recruit volunteers and raise money for a successful campaign.

Please list any endorsements you have received.

PRIORITIES

Briefly describe your key priorities and issue(s) on which you will focus if elected.

Collective Bargaining

Protecting Workers' Rights

Corporate funded groups and organizations have a goal to eliminate unions in both the public and private sector. The collective bargaining process promotes workplace stability and protects workers' rights, wages, benefits and working conditions. States which restrict collective bargaining rights have lower standards of living for all working families.

1. ***Would you oppose measures that restrict collective bargaining for Illinois workers including, but not limited to, so called "Right to Work" legislation?***

Yes _____ No _____ Explain (if necessary) _____

2. ***Would you oppose legislation to ban dues deduction or to limit the rights of public employees to participate in the political process?***

Yes _____ No _____ Explain (if necessary) _____

3. ***Would you be willing to provide public support for employees in other sectors seeking to organize and meeting employer resistance by (check as many as applicable):***

_____ Speaking at a rally?

_____ Calling on an employer to allow employees to make their own decision?

_____ Meeting with or sending a letter to employees in support of their right to organize a union?

Early Learning and Child Care Workers Right to Organize

The Child Care and Early Learning system in Illinois is disjointed. Programs are often overseen by different state agencies, have different funding sources, and have different standards or requirements. However, the outcome is the same; a low paid, black and brown women dominated workforce with high turnover and minimal supports. In order to create unity and progress within the workforce and industry, we must open the pathways for early learning and child care workers to unionize, regardless of setting or ownership. Unions representing members of the profession enable workers to come together with the expertise to advocate, mobilize public support, stabilize the continuity of care, and win the resources and funding needed to fully change the landscape of child care and early learning. This will help set industry standards and ensure the workforce is well compensated and play a central role in shaping the profession and policy.

4. ***Would you support Early Learning and Child Care Workers' right to organize in all settings?***

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Education Issues

Universal Access to Child Care

Illinois' Child Care system is dually broken; quality care is too expensive for many working families to have access, while the workforce is paid near poverty wages. In Illinois, 58% of all residents live in a child care desert. Child care supply is especially low among certain populations, with 65 percent of Hispanic/Latino families and 45% African American families living in areas without enough licensed child care providers. The Child Care Assistance Program serves 94% single parent low-income households, and on average 114,000 children per year; meanwhile, there are 627,000 children under the age of 6 potentially needing child care. The annual cost of care for an infant in a center is greater than tuition at a public college, and the average family spends 31% of their median income on child care for two children. This can mean a two-parent household making \$15 an hour can spend upwards to \$1,600 a month on child care, competing with housing, transportation, and food expenses. Parents of all income levels are often faced with difficult child care choices or worse, making career sacrifices that can affect their families' economic security. Child care is a necessity for all working families; there must be an increase in public investment to make affordable, accessible, high-quality child care a reality.

5. *Would you support efforts to establish universal access to affordable child care and early education programs that meet the needs of all families in Illinois?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain (if necessary) _____

Strengthening the Early Learning and Child Care Workforce

The Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) workforce is among the lowest paid professions. The Illinois ELCC workforce is among the highest credentialed nationally, however, the average income of a child care worker is \$23,000. The State's largest child care program, CCAP, has historically set center and home-based child-care rates based on market rates. However, the market rates measure how much an average family in a region can afford to pay, not the true cost of high-quality child care. Home child care providers in CCAP are paid at a daily rate per child, which must account for not just provider wages but also assistant wages, child care expenses, and other costs to running a home child care. Licensed home child care providers in the CCAP on average work 65 hours per week and make \$5.67 an hour. License Exempt (Family, Friend, and Neighbor) providers are paid so poorly (\$16.88 per child per day) that they often forgo a wage to keep up with the child's daily expenses. Center/community based ELCC workers depend on minimum wage/cost of living increases, and these primarily affect support service workers such as food aides and teaching assistants. ELCC teachers who staff infant toddler to preschool level classes are paid substantially less than a K-12 teacher with the same credentials. Most ELCC programs are supported by State and Federal funding (such as Head Start, CCAP, or

Preschool for All), which does not provide the financial support to deliver high quality child care. Not only that, but the ELCC workforce lack commonplace supports to assist home child care providers and community-based workers to advance their career pathways and increase quality, such as paid time off, paid professional development days, retirement, affordable health insurance, and scholarship/student loan debt relief.

6. *Would you commit to strengthening the early childhood workforce, and improving retention of providers from the same communities they serve by investing in professional development supports that will assist workers in advancing in their career pathways, and establishing adequate compensation levels for those working in publicly funded early care and education programs that includes living wages for home child care providers and parity with k-12 educators in community-based settings?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain (if necessary) _____

Charter Schools

10,000 SEIU Local 73 members work in public elementary and high schools. SEIU Local 73 members believe that public charter schools should be held to high standards. These standards include health and safety standards, civil rights requirements, accountability and transparency at individual campuses, and the requirement to employ only highly qualified classroom professionals.

7. *Would you support requiring charter schools to meet the same requirements as traditional public schools, particularly as they relate to access for all students and accountability and transparency by individual campuses?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

8. *Do you support the right of teachers and staff employed at charter schools to organize and join a union?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Higher Education

Illinois state universities consistently faced funding challenges due to underfunding by previous administrations. Universities laid off staff, cut programs, imposed furlough days on employees and displayed a fiscal uncertainty which caused enrollment declines. At the same time, the global economy makes higher education ever more important. Students with access to higher education have access to more employment opportunities. Next year, it is estimated that 2/3rds of all job openings will require post-secondary education or training.

9. *Would you support efforts to strengthen our state’s public universities by seeking to rebuild state funding levels?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

10. *Would you oppose further cuts to inflation-adjusted higher education funding?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

11. *Would you support increased for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) that helps the neediest students afford college tuition?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Healthcare and Human Services

Hospital Assessment Program

The Illinois Hospital Assessment Program distributes \$3.5 billion in Medicaid funding to hospitals across the state in the form of rate enhancements and targeted supplemental payments. The purpose of the assessment program is to provide supplemental financial support to safety-net and critical access hospitals that care for a disproportionate percentage of the state’s Medicaid and uninsured populations. In 2018, however, the Illinois Hospital Association crafted a new version of the assessment program that lavishes unnecessary funding on big health systems by depriving safety-net and critical access providers of critical supplement payments.

12. *Would you support a more equitable assessment program that prioritizes and protects Medicaid dependent hospitals in both funding intake and distribution?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain (if necessary) _____

Health Facilities and Service Review Board (HFSRB Reform)

The Health Facilities and Services Review Board (HFSRB) is responsible for approving the addition or elimination of health facilities and services in Illinois based on community need. Unfortunately, the board has little enforcement capacity and relies on an outdated methodology to determine need for services. In an era characterized by rapid consolidation in the hospital industry coupled with divestment from Chicago by big health systems, the board’s planning and regulatory functions are more critical than ever to insure equitable access to health services.

13. *Would you support reforms that provide the HFSRB with meaningful enforcement powers and update the board’s review criteria to include health inequities and utilization of/need for non-inpatient services?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain (if necessary) _____

Cook County Health System

SEIU Local 73 represents more than 1,500 workers in the Cook County Health System. Ongoing structural short staffing is a significant issue that impacts patient care and our members' working conditions. The Cook County Health System's response has been to award expensive, short-term contracts to staffing agencies that waste money that could be used to recruit and retain permanent staff.

14. Would you support efforts to limit the time and reasons short-term staffing agencies can be used within the Cook County Health System?

Yes _____ No _____ Explain (if necessary) _____

Service and Maintenance Safe-Staffing

Illinois nurses are fighting for mandatory patient-to-nurse staffing ratios. During the last legislative session, the Illinois Nurses Association backed the Safe Patient Limits Act (HB 2604) which sets limits on the number of patients nurses can care for at one time. Patient safety is not solely dependent on adequate nurse staffing, however; adequate service and maintenance staffing is also necessary to provide safe and timely care to patients.

15. Would you support an amendment to the nurse staffing bill or separate piece of legislation to establish mandatory staffing disclosure and labor management staffing committees for hospital service and maintenance workers?

Yes _____ No _____ Explain (if necessary) _____

Fair Wages for Disability Service Employees

SEIU represents private sector direct service employees who care for individuals with developmental disabilities at nonprofit community-based agencies under contract with the State of Illinois. Historically underfunded and paying poverty-level wages, these agencies received one rate increase in ten years. As a result, wages have fallen so far behind that it is becoming extraordinarily difficult to fill vacancies in these agencies. Agencies are reporting that up to 25% of their staffing slots remain empty. Responding to this crisis, recent General Assembly budgets included wage increases for Direct Service Personnel. In an effort to raise wages consistently for these workers and compete with other industries, SEIU supports raising the wages for Direct Service Personnel.

16. Would you support legislation to raise the wages of Direct Support Personnel? Yes
_____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Universal Homecare Program

Illinois families are struggling to afford care for their loved ones, often leaving the workforce, sacrificing their own economic security, or being forced to put their relatives in nursing homes

because there are no other options. Out of pocket costs of care in Illinois range from \$28,602 for a home care worker part-time to \$78,293 for a private room in a nursing home. While most families have turned to Medicaid to cover their long-term care expenses, these Illinoisans must completely drain their life savings, in some instances, becoming poor to qualify for Medicaid services. By Illinois instituting a Universal Homecare Program, millions of residents would be comforted knowing a reliable and financially stable homecare benefit awaits them anytime they should need to access it.

17. *Would you support a universal homecare program, funded by a payroll tax, that provides homecare services for all Illinoisans with a minimum determination of need score of 29 regardless of income or age?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Nursing Home Staffing

Illinois nursing homes are severely short staffed, jeopardizing resident quality of care and worker safety. It is not uncommon for a certified nursing assistant (CNA) to be asked to perform the duties of dietary and housekeeping staff in addition to their CNA responsibilities. This practice is meant to increase the profits of nursing home owners by not hiring an adequate number of care staff. This further threatens patient and staff well-being.

18. *Would you support an amendment to state law that explicitly prohibits this practice, stating that nursing homes must hire adequate housekeeping and dietary staff to ensure CNAs are not being overworked?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Revenue and Retirement

State Revenue

Despite the increase in the state income tax, Illinois maintains a structural fiscal imbalance causing the state to spend more money than it takes in each year. Illinois consistently ranks at or near the bottom when it comes to state support for vital public services. At the same time, over 2/3rds of Illinois corporations pay no state income tax because they enjoy generous tax loopholes.

19. *Would you support an expansion of the sales tax base by taxing services which are taxed by many of Illinois' neighboring states?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

20. *Would you support closing tax loopholes which allow corporations to avoid paying their fair share of taxes?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Illinois' outdated tax system is driving the structural fiscal imbalance. Illinois currently has a constitutional "flat tax" on income that is different from federal income tax law that has a "graduated" system of higher tax rates apply to higher income levels and lower tax rates apply to lower income levels.

21. Do you support amending the Illinois constitution to change Illinois' outdated and unfair state income tax and instead provide a fairer tax for individuals and corporations (where lower rates apply to lower income levels and higher rates apply to higher income levels)?

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Pensions

The Illinois Supreme Court has ruled that the plain language of the State Constitution prohibits reductions in pension benefits. However, organizations and elected officials continue to propose pension funding "solutions" which reduce and impair pension benefits.

22. Would you support a process that brings all stakeholders together to develop a legal and reasonable plan to address Illinois pension funding shortfall?

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

23. Would you oppose replacing defined benefit pensions with defined contribution plans?

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

24. Would you oppose an amendment to the Illinois Constitution replacing the protections it provides for public employee retirement benefits?

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Local Government Funding

City and county budgets have been devastated by falling revenue and the state budget standoff. Layoffs and cuts to basic services are becoming more common. Legislation limiting the ability of local governments to raise property taxes to deal with the problems caused by falling revenue and state budget complications are becoming more frequent.

25. Would you oppose any effort to diminish the share of the state income tax revenues that local governments receive through the Local Government Distributive Fund?

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

26. *Would you oppose legislation that would impose property tax freezes on units of local government without providing those governments with an alternative ability to raise needed revenues?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

27. *Would you oppose legislation that would restrict public park districts from charging fees?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Illinois has 7,000 units of local government. Legislation seeking to consolidate units of local government are consistently introduced in the General Assembly. Local governments seeking to consolidate transfer their powers and duties to another unit of government. Often collective bargaining agreements and the duty of employers to honor the contracts are left out of legislation effectuating local government consolidation.

28. *Would you support adding language to local government consolidation legislation that protects the integrity of the bargaining unit and the existing contract as the powers and duties transfer to a new administrator?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Worker Protection

Paid Sick Leave

The Chicago City Council and Cook County Board of Commissioners recently implemented a new paid sick leave ordinance that requires employers to provide paid time off to employees for sick leave purposes. Under the ordinance, employers must provide workers the right to accrue and use up to 5 paid sick days or 40 hours per year, earned at a minimum of one hour for every 40 hours worked. Outside of Chicago/Cook County, however, hundreds of thousands of Illinois workers lack paid sick leave.

29. *Would you vote to support mandatory paid sick leave for all Illinois workers without preemption?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Family/Medical Leave

Across the state hundreds of thousands of workers do not have access to paid family or medical leave for their own illness or to care for a newborn child, a newly adopted or newly placed foster child, or a family member with a serious health condition.

30. *Would you vote to support a mandatory paid family/medical leave insurance program funded by a small payroll tax?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Prevailing Wage Act — Security and Cleaning Employees

Currently, the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act requires construction contractors working on state-funded construction projects to be compensated at standard prevailing wage and benefit levels.

31. *Would you support amending the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act to include security and cleaning employees at any facility built with public money?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Privatization

Privatization of government services has been shown to reduce the quality of services while providing little overall savings. Privatized janitorial services at the Chicago Public Schools failed to produce either savings or clean classrooms. Privatized workers receive reduced pay and benefits. The loss of jobs also has a ripple effect on local economies, as communities lose taxpayers with good-paying jobs who can invest and spend money in their communities.

32. *Would you oppose privatization of government services that entail lower compensation or fails to clearly document significant savings?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

33. *Would you support legislation offering taxpayers measurable standards for the privatization of personnel service contracts?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

34. *Would you oppose legislation that would remove privatization protections for non-instructional school employees which prohibit school districts from privatizing services if the primary cost-savings is cutting wages and benefits of employees?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Workers Compensation

Workers' Compensation in Illinois is a "no fault" system designed to compensate injured employees for lost wages and medical expenses. Significant changes were enacted in 2011 as a result of negotiations between business and labor that substantially reduced insurer payout costs. Premiums, however, have not seen a comparable reduction.

35. *Would you oppose changes to the workers' compensation laws aimed at reducing assistance for injured workers, such as limiting awards under the no-fault system based on causation?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

36. *Would you support legislation requiring workers' compensation insurers to pass along savings through lower premiums to employers?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____

Forward Illinois

SEIU is a member of Forward Illinois, a coalition of leading progressive organizations representing more than 500,000 member-activists, and supporting a bold agenda for Illinois including protections for workers and immigrants, protected rights to reproductive health care and against discrimination and gun violence, social, economic, and racial justice, a clean environment and action on climate change, and criminal justice reform.

37. *Do you plan to introduce legislation that Forward Illinois partners should consider supporting? Are there other issues or campaigns that would benefit from Forward Illinois support and collaboration?*

Yes _____ No _____ Explain if necessary _____